

Serial No.: 10/532038
Office Action Mailed August 26, 2008
Page 2 of 10

RECEIVED
CENTRAL FAX CENTER

NOV 26 2008

IN THE CLAIMS

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for producing methane gas from organic wastes, comprising:
treating organic wastes with at least one of supercritical water and sub-critical water to convert the organic wastes into low molecular weight substances;
separating ~~a water phase from~~ the treated substances into an oil phase, a water phase, and a solid phase, so that the water phase is collected; and
subjecting the collected water phase to methane fermentation.
2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the treatment for conversion into low molecular weight substances is a treatment with sub-critical water.
3. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein in the treatment with sub-critical water, a treatment temperature is 440 to 553 K, and a treatment pressure is 0.8 to 6.4 MPa.
4. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein a time taken for the treatment for conversion into low molecular weight substances is 1 to 20 minutes.
5. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the treatment for conversion into low molecular weight substances is performed continuously.
6. (Canceled)
7. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the water phase contains organic acid.

Serial No.: 10/53203B
Office Action Mailed August 26, 2008
Page 3 of 10

8. (Original) The method according to claim 7, wherein the organic acid includes acetic acid.
9. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein a time for the methane fermentation is in a range of 5 to 48 hours.
10. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein carbon digestion efficiency in the methane fermentation is 90% or more.
11. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the organic waste is activated sludge.
12. (Original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising separating and collecting a useful material generated in the treatment for conversion into low molecular weight substances.
13. (Original) The method according to claim 12, wherein the useful material generates at least one of phosphoric acid, organic acid, fatty acid, amino acid, and sugar.
14. (Original) The method according to claim 12, wherein by adjusting at least one of a treatment temperature and a treatment time in the treatment for conversion into low molecular weight substances, the useful material is allowed to be generated selectively.